

based upon secondary sexual characters are regarded as sections; all local races or supposed varietal forms are reduced to a dead level as synonyms. Although it is certain that in this matter of synonymy the author of the 'Moths of India' will have many opponents, and in the case of some species probably no followers, his action must yet be respected as an evidence of that indomitable self-reliance, without which the completion of so arduous a task as a comprehensive revision of the Indian Moths would have been quite impossible. Mr. Hampson has expressed his own honest convictions, and those who do not agree with the minor detail of synonymy are not bound to follow his lead; but in any case all true lepidopterists must most earnestly desire that the ability which the author has shown in bringing order out of chaotic confusion may be recognized by the sanction of a fourth volume, to include the *Pyraliæ*.

A. G. BUTLER.

### MISCELLANEOUS.

#### *The Irish Stoat distinct from the British.*

By OLDFIELD THOMAS and G. E. H. BARRETT HAMILTON.

[Preliminary note.]

THERE has always been a great deal of confusion as to the identity of the single Irish member of the genus *Putorius*; but the fact that it has a long black-tipped tail has always been hitherto taken as sufficient proof that it is a stoat (*P. ermineus*), and not, as the natives call it, a weasel. The third alternative—that it is neither—seems never to have presented itself to anyone's mind; but on a careful comparison of specimens we have now come to the conclusion that this animal is an insular intermediate form, with some of the characters of each of our two British species, and is not referable to either of them.

It may be called

*Putorius hibernicus*, sp. n.

Intermediate in size between the two allied species. Light colour of underside white, not yellowish; not extending on to the upper lip, much narrowed on chest and belly, and not extending on limbs beyond the middle of the forearms and lower legs, the whole of the hands and feet being brown with the exception of a few hairs on the ends of the toes. Tail as in the stoat, but rather shorter.

Dimensions of the type (an adult male), measured in the flesh:—

Head and body 228 millim.; tail 88; hind foot 40; ear 21. Basal length of skull 41·2.

*Type* from Enniskillen, killed Jan. 7, 1895; presented to the British Museum by J. E. Harting, Esq.

A fuller account of this interesting animal, and our reasons for distinguishing it, will appear in the 'Zoo'logist' for April.